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UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

SUBJECT : Infiltration in South Vietnam--1964

REFERENCE : USIB-D-24.5/1, 2 November 1964, limited distribution

1. The State member of USIB has requested that the attached report and Annexes I and II on this subject be placed on the Board agenda for 18 November 1964. The attachments replace the referenced document on the same subject. They were produced, following the receipt of additional information from MACV, by the same ad hoc interagency working group which produced the referenced document.

2. The State member recommends that the Board note the attached report and its Annexes as a whole, and approve the Conclusions in Section III of the report.

3. The attached report and its Annexes I and II on this subject are being scheduled for USIB consideration at the 18 November meeting of the Board.

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Executive Secretary

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Attachments

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Infiltration In South Vietnam: 1964

I. Introduction

1. Representatives of CIA, DIA, INR, and NSA have examined the MACV study on infiltration of October 31, 1964.

2. The MACV study expands on data recently submitted on infiltration in 1964, provides new figures on infiltration in the years 1959-1963 (last comprehensively reported by MACV in April 1964), and provides new information on infiltration organization and technique. We have confined ourselves to consideration of the numbers. We note in passing, however, that the report's material on organization and techniques is more complete and thus more convincing than any previously presented.

II. MACV's Findings

1. Infiltration during the first seven months of 1964 has been at a rate indicating a substantial increase over 1963. If the present rate is maintained for the remaining five months, MACV estimates that infiltration may run as high as 10,000 for all of 1964. Of 4,708 men reported as entering

South Vietnam during the first seven months of 1964, 3,500 have been confirmed and the remainder estimated. In MACV terminology, an infiltration is considered as having been "confirmed" when substantially the same information about the same infiltration group is derived from two POW's, two documents, or one POW and one document. For "estimative purposes," MACV accepts as valid the testimony of one POW or one document if there is no conflicting information.

2. New figures for infiltration in earlier years are as follows:

	<u>MACV October 1964 Study</u>	<u>MACV April 1964 Study</u>
1959-60	4,556	680
1961	5,443	5,581
1962	13,040	4,267
1963	<u>6,268</u>	<u>2,617-</u> <u>2,797+</u>
TOTAL	29,307	13,145- 13,325+

3. For the period 1959-1963, MACV's latest study describes the totals as "reported" or "indicated" and does not provide a breakdown between confirmed and estimated. Study of the detailed appendix leads us to believe that a substantial number of those included in the new figures for this period are estimated,

according to MACV's criteria, rather than confirmed. We note, however, that in the context of the overall problems we confront in securing intelligence on infiltration (discussed in Annexes I and II of this paper), the fact that intelligence on a given infiltration has been obtained from only one POW or one document should not lead us to minimize the data.

4. There is no evidence that regular PAVN units have infiltrated. However, the infiltration in 1964 of a number of young ethnic North Vietnamese draftees has been confirmed. Indeed, MACV believes, but has not confirmed, that about 75% of the 1964 infiltrators are young draftees from the north who are incorporated into existing units in South Vietnam. In MACV's opinion this utilization of North Vietnamese indicates that Hanoi has exhausted its useable pool of ethnic South Vietnamese veterans who fought in the south during the Indochina war and were regrouped in the north after the ceasefire in 1954.

III.

1. The Intelligence Community in Washington does not have the depth or volume of raw intelligence that is available to MACV to confirm or to estimate the

the number of Viet Cong infiltrators. This continues to be primarily a function of MACV which has the facilities and organization for processing this information. A substantial volume of this data, however, is now available in Washington for 1964 and points to the magnitude for that year indicated by MACV. Although increasing material is available for earlier years, it has not received the systematic analysis in Washington that is feasible in the field.

2. MACV's study does not lead to the conclusion, earlier suggested in messages from the field, that there has been a considerable increase in infiltration in 1964 as compared with all earlier years. The new figures, although still subject to modification as new information is developed, suggest rather an impressive increase over 1963, but perhaps a decline from 1962.

3. The principal conclusion suggested by MACV's estimate is that the infiltration problem as a whole is of considerably greater magnitude than was indicated by earlier studies. Further analysis by the Intelligence Community of the overall importance of infiltration to the Communist war effort in South Vietnam appears desirable.

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4. MACV's estimate of the extent and nature of ethnic North Vietnamese infiltration, if confirmed, suggests that the apparent current utilization of native North Vietnamese draftees in large numbers is a response to manpower problems rather than an indication of an intent on Hanoi's part to alter the character of the war and the tactics employed therein. However, the infiltration of ethnic North Vietnamese may indicate that Hanoi is now less concerned than in the past with concealing its direct involvement in the war in South Vietnam.

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ANNEX I

Intelligence Problems in Estimating Infiltration

I. Intelligence Sources

The great bulk of US intelligence on infiltration into South Vietnam is derived from official Vietnamese sources. These sources are supplemented by MACV, CAS, and other agency intelligence and by air and ground reconnaissance in Vietnam and Laos. MACV is responsible for final evaluation and reporting on infiltration, utilizing field intelligence available from all GVN and US agencies, but the latter also evaluate and analyze the raw Vietnamese-originated information. In confirming or estimating numbers of infiltrators, MACV relies entirely on POW interrogations and captured documents. Other sources of information serve only as an aid in the analysis process and to provide indications of possible Viet Cong infiltration. In its infiltration study published in October 1964, MACV stated that the total arrived at in the study--over 34,000 infiltrators for the period 1959 through 1964--was based on information supplied by 185 prisoners of whom 164 actually infiltrated. While these prisoners are few in number

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they represent a considerable increase during 1964. For example, MACV's earlier infiltration study published in April 1964 based its findings on total infiltrators--over 13,000 confirmed from 1960 through 1963--on information from 98 prisoners of whom 85 actually infiltrated.

II. Intelligence Deficiencies

Despite appreciable improvements in the quality and scope of US and GVN intelligence, there are still serious deficiencies in our intelligence on infiltration. These deficiencies stem largely from the inadequacies of the Vietnamese intelligence system and the intelligence security maintained by the clandestine Viet Cong apparatus. To date, the GVN has had only limited success in acquiring information on infiltration from the local population. The diverse functions of the Vietnamese intelligence agencies are not effectively coordinated. The interrogation of Viet Cong prisoners by South Vietnamese authorities is not systematic or thorough. The inadequacies of GVN intelligence collection at the local level, coupled with organizational and attitudinal deficiencies, have limited the amount of reliable information on Viet Cong infiltration.

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These deficiencies, as well as a number of other difficulties, also delay the confirmation of suspected infiltration by at least several months. The delay factor is particularly important in its effects on efforts to estimate total infiltration for any given period or to determine upward and downward trends, as demonstrated by the statistics in MACV's April and October 1964 studies. Furthermore, MACV believes that a valid estimate of infiltration for all of 1964 will not be possible until late in the Spring of 1965.

Partly because of the nature of the terrain and foliage, as well as the Viet Cong's use of numerous trails and paths rather than roads as the principal infiltration routes, aerial reconnaissance in Vietnam and Laos has produced virtually no reliable intelligence on infiltration into South Vietnam. Air reconnaissance in Laos since May 1964 has provided a number of sites which appear to be associated with military activity and which are presently under attack by RLAF T-28 strikes. However, we are unable to determine the nature of the activity and whether or to what extent it may be related to infiltration into South Vietnam.

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Reports from US-trained road-watch and trail-watch teams located in the Laos corridor are other sources of intelligence on infiltration. The majority of the teams are presently operating in the corridor northeast of Tchepone and south of the Mu Gia pass. There is no significant coverage of the infiltration area southeast of Tchepone toward the South Vietnam border. Efforts are being made, however, to expand coverage of this area.

Little intelligence on infiltration into South Vietnam has thus far been derived from these teams, partly because of the still formative character of the operation and the problems of access to the corridor. Moreover, the presence of Pather Lao troops in this area makes it difficult to distinguish between activity related to infiltration into South Vietnam and purely Pather Lao operations or movements. Detection is further inhibited by the tight security maintained by the Viet Cong during transit, particularly while in Laos.

Aerial reconnaissance and road watch teams have provided more information on truck movements than on foot movements. An analysis of Communist truck

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traffic patterns indicates that seasonable stockpiling occurs in the Tchepone/Muong Phine area, dependent on the prevailing monsoonal conditions. During the dry season, extensive truck traffic has been observed on the highways leading from North Vietnam, generally continuing up to the beginning of the rainy season in mid-May. This stockpiling could be for several reasons: (1) to insure adequate support for Communist forces in south and central Laos during the rainy season when the roads become impassable; (2) to provide a logistic reserve for future increased military activity by Communist forces in Laos; and (3) to increase support for the Viet Cong in South Vietnam. It is probable that all three of these reasons are valid, in varying degrees, as explanations for Communist dry season emphasis on stockpiling.

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According to [] the border surveillance effort in South Vietnam has not been very productive thus far in detecting or intercepting infiltration.

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